

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 OMB-01 TRSE-00 CU-02 SSM-03 AID-05 EB-08
IO-13 ACDA-07 EUR-12 AF-10 DHA-02 /119 W
-----291540Z 052014 /44

R 291330Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5929
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 3014
E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT,PFOR, IS
SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH MK YITZHAK NAVON

BEGIN SUMMARY: NAVON CONSIDERED THE ALIGNMENT'S
PROSPECTS AS GOOD BUT INDICATED CONCERN OVER THE
POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF ABBA EBAN'S BANK ACCOUNT PROBLEMS,
THE STATE COMPTROLLER'S CRITICAL REPORT, AND THE
PENCHANT OF YOUNG VOTERS TO BE ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT.
EXCEPT FOR SHELI AND RAKAH, HE VIEWED ALL PARTIES
AS POTENTIAL COALITION PARTNERS FOR THE ALIGNMENT.
HE HIMSELF WAS INTERESTED IN THE EDUCATION PORTFOLIO.
INDICATING DISQUIET OVER POSSIBLE U.S. POLICY CHANGES,
NAVON STATED HIS PREFERENCE FOR AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT
OVER FURTHER INTERIM AGREEMENTS AND MAINTAINED THAT
CONCESSIONS ON THE WEST BANK COULD BE MADE ONLY WITHIN
THE FRAMEWORK OF A PEACE AGREEMENT WITH JORDAN. END SUMMARY

1. CHARGE AND POLITICAL OFFICER MET WITH NAVON
IN JERUSALEM ON APRIL 27. NAVON, A RAFI LEADER
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AND PERES CONFIDANT, IS CHAIRMAN OF THE KNESSET
FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND SECURITY COMMITTEE, HARNESSED
TO A HEAVY SCHEDULE OF CAMPAIGNING, HE HAD JUST
COME FROM A SESSION BEFORE THE TV CAMERAS VIDEO-
TAPING A CAMPAIGN SPEECH. (TV ELECTIONEERING
BEGAN APRIL 28. TIME ON THE GOVERNMENT CONTROLLED
MEDIUM IS ALLOCATED ON THE BASIS OF CURRENT

KNESSET REPRESENTATION, WITH THE ALIGNMENT, FOR EXAMPLE, RECEIVING SOME THREE HOURS WHILE A TOTAL OF ONLY TEN MINUTES IS GIVEN TO PARTIES NOT NOW REPRESENTED IN THE KNESSET, E.G., THE DMC.) NAVON NOTED THAT ARRANGEMENTS FOR A PERES-BEGIN DEBATE ARE PROCEEDING AND IT IS EXPECTED TO BE HELD MAY 12. HE DID NOT KNOW WHETHER BEGIN'S ILLNESS WOULD HURT OR HELP THE LIKUD. THE SYMPATHY VOTE COULD COUNTER-BALANCE THE FEAR THAT WERE BEGIN TO LEAVE THE SCENE, THE LIKUD WOULD BE DEVOID OF LEADERSHIP.

2. IT CAME AS A SURPRISE (IN VIEW OF HIS LONG-TIME SUPPORT OF PERES) THAT NAVON BELIEVED THE ALIGNMENT'S FORTUNES NOW LOOKED SOMEWHAT BRIGHTER. BUT HE EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER EBAN'S PROBLEMS WITH HIS U.S. BANK ACCOUNTS AND WINCED IN MOCK PAIN WHEN THE COMPTROLLER'S HIGHLY CRITICAL ANNUAL REPORT (SEPTEL) WAS MENTIONED; THAT REPORT IS PARTICULARLY CRITICAL OF THE MINISTRIES OF DEFENSE AND FINANCE. NOTING THAT THE COMPTROLLER HAS TIES WITH THE NRP, HE STRONGLY HINTED THAT THE TIMING OF ITS RELEASE, IF NOT ITS CONTENTS, WAS POLITICALLY INSPIRED.

3. NAVON WAS RELUCTANT TO MAKE ANY ELECTION PREDICTIONS, ONLY VENTURING GUESSES ON THE SMALLER PARTIES: NRP - 9 TO 11; RAKAH - 6 OR 7; SHELI - 2 OR 3; WITH THE HELP OF SOME MAPAM VOTERS TURNED OFF BY THAT PARTY'S REMAINING IN THE ALIGNMENT. HE NOTED WITH CONCERN THAT SOME 250,000 WILL BE VOTING FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE FIRST TIME--MAINLY YOUTH. SINCE THE YOUNG TEND TO VOTE AGAINST THE ESTABLISHMENT, THEIR VOTES WOULD LIKELY GO TO THE LIKUD, DMC AND SHELI. ALTHOUGH HE BELIEVED THE DMC WAS ON THE DECLINE, HE DID NOT THINK THIS WAS DUE TO THE HAOLOM HAZEH ACCUSATIONS AGAINST YADIN. PERSONALLY, HE BELIEVED YADIN'S DENIALS OF ANY WRONG-DOING. THE DMC'S PROBLEM WAS THE NOTABLE ABSENCE OF SEPHARDIC OR WORKING CLASS ISRAELIS FROM ITS LIST. SHMUEL TAMIR'S APPARENT OVERRIDING INFLUENCE IN THE PARTY ALSO WAS A DRAWBACK.

4. THE CAMPAIGN ISSUES WILL BE "FOREIGN AFFAIRS, SECURITY AND THE ARABS," NAVON HOPED. NEVERTHELESS, HE STRESSED THAT THE NEXT GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE TO

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EO A GREAT DEAL TO MEET ISRAEL'S INTERNAL PROBLEMS,
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC. ASSUMING THE ALIGNMENT
FORMS THE NEXT COALITION, HE WOULD NOT RULE OUT
ANY PARTY AS A PARTNER EXCEPT SHELI "AND OF
COURSE RAKAH."

5. NAVON WAS FRANK IN SAYING THAT HE WANTED THE
EDUCATION AND CULTURAL PORTFOLIO. NOR DID HE DENY
AN INTEREST IN THE POST OF KNESSET SPEAKER AS A SECOND
CHOICE. HE HAD NO SUGGESTIONS AS TO HIS REPLACE-
MENT AS CHAIRMAN OF THE SECURITY AND DEFENSE
COMMITTEE; HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE FOR
RABIN TO SEEK THAT POST, EVEN THOUGH EMINENTLY
QUALIFIED. COMMITTEE CHAIRMANSHIPS RESULT FROM
INTRA-PARTY BARGAINING, HE EXPLAINED, AND DO NOT
AUTOMATICALLY ACCRUE TO THE WINNING PARTY.

6. TURNING TO THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT, NAVON
EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT NEGOTIATIONS WOULD
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BEGIN THIS YEAR, BUT NOT NECESSARILY AT GENEVA.
HE WAS CONCERNED OVER WHAT HE THOUGHT WERE

INDICATIONS OF A U.S. POLICY CHANGE AND WONDERED WITH SOME DISQUIET IF THE BROOKINGS REPORT WAS NOW THE BASIS OF U.S. MIDDLE EST POLICY. FOR HIS PART, NAVON SAID HE FAVORED EFFORTS TOWARD AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT AND REJECTED "WASTING TIME AND NEGOTIATING CARDS" (ISRAEL'S) ON FURTHER INTERIM AGREEMENTS--ALTHOUGH HE ADMITTED THAT HE WAS IN THE MINORITY WITHIN THE LABOR PARTY ON THIS QUESTION. HE SAID THAT THE PARTY WAS READY FOR FURTHER TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS, EVEN WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF INTERIM AGREEMENTS WITH EGYPT AND SYRIA--BUT NOT WITH JORDAN. HE INSISTED THAT CONCESSIONS ON THE WEST BANK COULD ONLY COME AS PART OF AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT WITH JORDAN. REMINDED THAT HE HAD UNSUCCESSFULLY TRIED TO HAVE THE LABOR PARTY SUPPORT NEGOTIATIONS WITH ANY PALESTINIAN GROUP THAT ACCEPTED ISRAEL AND RENOUNCED TERROR, NAVON COMMENTED THAT THIS, IN EFFECT, WOULD NOT INCLUDE THE PLO BECAUSE IF THE PLO ACCEPTED THOSE CONDITIONS, "IT WOULD NO LONGER BE THE PLO."

7. COMMENT: NAVON IS ONE OF THE FEW SEPHARDIC POLITICIANS WITH MAJOR INFLUENCE IN THE LABOR PARTY. ON HIS FATHER'S SIDE HIS ROOTS GO BACK TO A FAMILY THAT CAME TO JERUSALEM FROM TURKEY ABOUT 1700. HIS MOTHER'S FATHER EMIGRATED FROM MOROCCO IN 1885. AS A DISCIPLE OF BEN-GURION AND A CHARTER MEMBER OF RAFI, BUT AT THE SAME TIME A PROMINENT DOVE, NAVON IS SOMETHING OF AN ANOMALY WITHIN THE LABOR PARTY. HIS EARLY AND UNWAVERING SUPPORT OF PERES (WHICH HELPED TO BLUR PERES' HAWKISH IMAGE), ALONG WITH HIS POPULARITY WITHIN THE PARTY AND AMONG THE GENERAL PUBLIC, ASSURE HIM OF A PROMINENT ROLE IN A PERES GOVERNMENT. HIS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MODERATION AND THE TRUST HE ENGENDERS HELP TO OFF-SET THE STILL PREVALENT PERCEPTION OF PERES AS BOTH A HARDLINER AND AN OPPORTUNIST. DUNNIGAN

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Message Attributes

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